



## Frequently Asked Questions for Colleges & Universities

# Mumps

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### **What are the symptoms of mumps?**

The most common symptoms of mumps include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Tiredness
- Loss of appetite
- Swollen and tender salivary glands under the ears on one or both sides (parotitis)

Some people, however, have very mild or no symptoms and often they do not know they have the disease.

### **How is mumps spread?**

Mumps is a contagious disease caused by a virus. It spreads through saliva or mucus from the mouth, nose, or throat.

An infected person can spread the virus by:

- kissing, coughing, sneezing, or talking
- sharing items, such as cups or eating utensils, with others
- touching objects or surfaces with unwashed hands that are then touched by others

Mumps likely spreads before the salivary glands begin to swell and up to five days after the swelling begins.

### **What should people infected with mumps do to prevent spreading it to others?**

When you have mumps, you should avoid prolonged, close contact with other people until five days after symptoms began or until you are well, whichever is longer. You should stay home and limit contact with the people you live with; for example, sleep by yourself in a separate room if you can. Staying home while sick with mumps is an important way to avoid spreading the virus to other people.

### **Where have cases of mumps recently been identified in Iowa?**

While mump cases are being identified all over Iowa, most cases are associated with students at the University of Iowa.

### **Can people who have been vaccinated with MMR still be infected with mumps?**

MMR vaccine prevents most, but not all, cases of mumps and complications caused by the disease. Two doses of the vaccine are about 88 percent effective at preventing mumps; one dose is about 78 percent effective.

People who have received two doses of the MMR vaccine are about nine times less likely to get mumps than unvaccinated people who have the same exposure to mumps virus. However, some people who receive two doses of MMR can still get mumps, especially if they have prolonged, close contact with

someone who has the disease. If a vaccinated person does get mumps, they will likely have less severe illness than an unvaccinated person.

**Should everyone get a third dose of MMR vaccine to protect against mumps?**

When mumps cases are occurring at colleges or universities, national criteria are used to determine when a third dose of MMR should be recommended. These criteria are based on the number of people at the university who have become ill. These criteria have been met for the University of Iowa student body; therefore, a third dose of MMR is currently being recommended for University of Iowa students less than 25 years of age.

No other colleges or universities in Iowa have met the national criteria; therefore, a third dose of MMR vaccine has not been recommended by public health officials.

**What should colleges or universities do if mumps cases have been identified in their facilities?**

Colleges and universities should reinforce that persons infected with mumps should not go back to school, work, or other public places until 5 days after symptoms began or until they are well, whichever is longer.

People who have been in contact with a person infected with mumps should have their immunization status evaluated. Anyone who is not immune and has not received two doses of a MMR should be vaccinated. Persons who may have been exposed should be educated on the signs and symptoms of mumps disease, and should seek medical attention as soon as any of these symptoms begin.

**What should every college or university do to decrease or help prevent mumps transmission?**

Colleges and universities should promote healthy habits among students and staff, such as:

- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and putting your used tissue in the trash can. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve or elbow, not your hands.
- Washing your hands often with soap and water.
- Avoiding sharing drinks or eating utensils.
- Disinfecting frequently touched surfaces, such as toys, doorknobs, tables, counters.